



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



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To: DOCKET 327 ANALYST Fax #: 827-2980

From: PAED RIESE

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Comments:

WILL MAIL OUT ORIGINAL TODAY. I WILL BE ON VACATION NEXT
WEEK, SO IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CALL ME TODAY (860-424-4100)
ON MAY 14 AFTER 1 P.M.

Jed Davis

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



May 1, 2007

Daniel F. Caruso, Chairman
Connecticut Siting Council
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, Connecticut 06051

RE: Electric Substation
Connecticut Light and Power Company
Oxford, Connecticut
Docket No. 327

Dear Chairman Caruso:

Staff of this department has reviewed the above-referenced application for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need and has visited the site proposed for this facility. Based on these efforts, the following comments are offered to the Council for your use in this docket:

Connecticut Light and Power Company proposes to construct a 115-kV to 13.8-kV electric substation adjacent to transmission line circuit 1575 in the northern portion of Oxford.

Description of Proposed Site

The proposed substation site is a well advanced reverting field immediately west of and adjacent to a transmission line right-of-way containing three circuits including circuit 1575, which the substation will tie in to. The site slopes to the northwest down to a wetland area and toward the Larkin State Park Trail. Pole sized red maples, along with lesser amounts of autumn olive and multiflora rose, cover the site. The grassed field shown in the first two photos of Appendix A and labeled as views of the substation parcel are taken adjacent to transmission structure 448. As shown on the site plan on page 77 and confirmed by two stakes marked 'fence corner' at the site, the actual substation site is immediately adjacent to structure 1444 which is just north of structure 448. The actual substation site is considerably overgrown and bears little resemblance to the adjacent field shown in the two Appendix A photos.

There are no outcrops or large boulders on the site, which supports the conclusion in the application that blasting is unlikely to be necessary. There are no large trees on the site. Some mature trees along the fence line south of the site will likely need to be removed, but these are

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not noteworthy in any way. Access to the site is via a direct route on and along the transmission line right-of-way. One small intermittent watercourse would be crossed by the access road.

Facility Impact on Surrounding Properties

The proposed substation site is well isolated from the nearest residences, none of which can be seen from the site. There will be either no visibility or very negligible visibility of the substation from the Jacks Hill Cemetery.

Larkin State Park Trail runs northwest of the substation site, approximately 400' from the nearest point of the facility, based on the site plan on page 77. The substation will probably be visible from the trail, but its presence will be largely screened by intervening forest, at least during the warmer months, and by the difference in elevation with the substation sitting well above the trail. The embankment at the southern end of the Waterbury-Oxford Airport runway is a much more prominent visual feature in this area of the trail and would draw the attention of bikers and riders in that direction rather than toward the substation.

Miscellaneous Application Commentary

DEP appreciates the cooperation of Connecticut Light and Power in installing two nesting boxes for American kestrels on its property around the substation.

The application mentions (page 3) the additional 4.44 acre transmission line easement area and shows this property on several maps including that on the following page. The application does not describe what purpose this easement area will serve. Based on the site plan on page 77, it is assumed that this additional easement area is needed to accommodate the lines coming from structure 1445 to the substation, but this is not stated anywhere in the application. This property is also referred to as 'acquired' in several places in the application, as opposed to being merely an easement.

Finding of Fact #19 in the Docket 304 decision, as contained in Appendix C, makes mention of possible efforts to decrease the height of the existing transmission line structures south of Waterbury-Oxford Airport. No reference is made to this possibility in the substation application.

The application lists both southern arrowwood (p. 35) and northern arrowwood (p.37) as *Viburnum dentatum*. It is indeed possible that both species may be on the CL&P property, but the botanical name for northern arrowwood is *Viburnum recognitum*.

Conclusion

The proposed site is an appropriate choice for the Oxford substation in terms of compatible surroundings, environmental impacts, ease of constructability, and system needs. Also, the proximal DEP property, the Larkin State Park Trail, will not be unduly impacted by this facility.

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Thank you for the opportunity to review this application and to submit these comments to the Council. Should you, other Council members or Council staff have any questions, please feel free to call me at (860) 424-4110.

Respectfully yours,

Frederick L. Riese

Frederick L. Riese
Senior Environmental Analyst

cc: Commissioner Gina McCarthy